



## Testimony in Support of Legislation Implementing Early Voting and Improving the Absentee Voting Process

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February 22, 2023

Good morning Chair Flexer, Chair Blumenthal, Ranking Members Senator Sampson and Representative Mastrofrancesco, and members of the Government Administration and Elections Committee.

My name is Tom Stewart, and I am a Director of Policy for Secure Democracy USA. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today in support of legislative proposals that would implement early voting, allow no-excuse absentee voting, and add crucial improvements like paid-postage and an opportunity for absentee voters in Connecticut to cure minor deficiencies in their ballot. Secure Democracy USA is a national, nonpartisan nonprofit working to strengthen confidence in our elections and improve voter access throughout the United States. We work across the aisle with lawmakers to safeguard and improve our voting systems. We collaborate with state leaders, election administrators, policy experts, and allies to ensure that all eligible citizens have the freedom to vote how they choose.

Connecticut is one of only four states that does not provide voters with an opportunity to vote early in person. That is why Secure Democracy proudly supported last year's long-overdue early voting ballot measure. Now that it's time to implement that vision, we are happy to support the trio of proposals before you today: the Committee Bill, H.B. 5004; S.B. 1057; and S.B. 1064. These bills all contain good ideas and collectively offer an excellent range of options. Most crucially, all three move Connecticut forward and expand voters' access.

We also support S.J.R. 29 and H.J.R. 1 to amend the constitution to allow no-excuse absentee voting. Twenty-nine states and the District of Columbia have no-excuse absentee voting, including Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and Maine. With this legislation, you can remove a significant and burdensome barrier to voting.

Finally, Secure Democracy supports H.B. 6693 which would, among other things, provide absentee voters with prepaid postage and a cure process enabling elections officials to contact voters to correct common, honest mistakes on their ballot such as a missing signature. By enacting these policies - which have been adopted in both red and blue states - you have the opportunity to put Connecticut where it belongs: leading the national effort to protect and expand voter access.

On behalf of Secure Democracy USA, I ask you to support these bills and seize that opportunity. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,

Tom Stewart  
Director of Policy  
Secure Democracy USA